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OCTOBER 1965

VOL. 16 ISSUE 8M

CLUB • MAGAZINE

Departments 4 From the Editor

> 24 Test Yourself

28 Bookshelf

The Short Story 40

We Will Come Back by Jack Ritchie

84 Quote and Unquote

Food 10 Dining in America

by Franco Borghese 22

Humor . . And Still More Looney Laws On Bed, Board and Bottle

by Dick Hyman

Health 36 What Is Your HIQ? by Leslie R. Jones

Travel 42 Innocents Aboard by Bill Ballantine

Sports 62 Football For Love and (Sometimes) Money

by Arturo F. Gonzalez Jr. 52

Features Wrestling: The Great Put-on by Milton Gross

The Sole Shrine of Hollywood 56 by I. G. Edmonds

60 Offbeat Fashion Shows

64 What's the Big Idea?

by Lee Silvian **Fiction** 50 Stately Homes . . . and the Box

by Arthur Porges

Menswear Fashions Fall Fashion Forecast **Our Cover**

Author/artist Bill Ballantine's impression of a Calypso farewell as seen from the deck of a Grace Line cruise ship. Read his story on page 42.

PHOTO CREDITS

MATTY SIMMONS

GEORGE EELLS

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executive editor managing editor

> art director art editor

assistant editor contributing editor

JOHN V. CIOFALO RICHARD SOMMERS

ADRIENNE HELLER

DAVID ALDRICH

national advertising representatives associate advertising director

business manager circulation manager advertising representatives:

San Francisco Chicago Los Angeles Miami

LEONARD MOGEL ASSOCIATES, INC. Donald J. Crawford

Edythe Kopman Marge Landrau

Duncan Scott & Marshall, 85 Post Street

Gravenhorst & Associates, 873 Forest Hill Road, Lake Forest Duncan Scott & Marshall, 1830 West Eighth Street The Hal Winter Company, 7450 Ocean Terrace, Miami Beach

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DINERS CLUB MAGAZINE # OCTOBER, 1965

2M

We Will Come Back The Short Short / by Jack Ritchie

is thick blunt fingers riffled through the bundle of a currency. "It is nothing but paper to me."

My father smiled slightly. "You do not accept your coun-

try's money?"

The innkeeper shrugged. "I have a cupboard of this paper. Tomorrow, the government will probably print more." He regarded my father and me speculatively. "In times such as these, gold is still good. Or silver."

I removed a coin from my pocket and showed it to him. He reached for it, but I pulled my hand back. "You will

get this when we are over the border.'

His eyes flickered. "How do I know it is not counterfeit? There are many such coins these days.

"It is gold," I said. I opened my hand.

He picked up the coin and examined it. "Ah," he said. "One of the old ones. I have not seen one in a long time." He returned the coin reluctantly. "Very well. We will leave at dawn tomorrow.'

He studied us again. "You would like something to eat?" My father nodded. "And brandy."
He shook his head. "We do not have brandy. Only

whisky.'

My father grimaced. "And I suppose the farmers about here make it for you?" He sighed. "Very well. Whisky."

The innkeeper still waited.

'We will pay for it in silver," I said.

He smiled and left us.

My father and I moved closer to the fire. He warmed his hands. "Perhaps we do not need him at all. It is only 10 miles to the border."

"Yes," I said. "But that is forest and we do not know the paths. Even if it is only 10 miles, it might take us days

without a guide.

My father agreed wearily. "I suppose you are right, We have traveled for two weeks. And even a day more than necessary seems too much." He watched the flames. "How many do you think have fled so far?'

"At least 20,000," I said. "That is what I heard."

He sighed. "And how many more would leave if they could?

"Not one in three favored the revolution," I said.

My father smiled faintly. "That is difficult to believe today. Everyone proclaims himself a patriot of the new government.'

I kicked a smoldering ember back into the fire. "The revolution was the work of a small band of fanatics.

My father nodded. "That is the way of revolutions. And the two out of three who were loyal did nothing. Or almost

"We tried," I said.

"Yes," my father said. "We tried. And now we must leave our country with nothing but the clothes on our backs and a few coins.

"It is not my country," I said. "Not any more."

The innkeeper returned with the whisky and two mugs. He placed them on the rough wooden table. "The meat will be ready soon." He went to a barrel against the wall and poured himself what appeared to be beer. He did not seem disposed to leave us.

My father poured whisky for himself and me and then spoke to him. "You have guided others across the border

The innkeeper wiped his lips. "Some." "And have you ever gotten into trouble?"

He shook his head. "No trouble. Why should there be trouble?"

I tasted my whisky and it was indeed raw. "Tell me, innkeeper," I said. "Did you participate in the revolution?

Did you carry a weapon on your shoulder?"

He smiled. "There was no fighting here. I never saw a

soldier from either side.'

He cautiously looked us over. "It has been more than a year since the revolution ended. Did it take you all this time to reach the border?"

My father's voice was tired. "We tried to adjust."

The innkeeper squinted slightly. "Adjust?"

"Yes," I said bitterly. "We tried to adjust. We went back to our lands and we tried to accept the new government. We worked and we held our tongues. But our neighbors became more and more patriotic and, one night, after they had consumed a keg of whisky, they came and burned down our buildings.'

The innkeeper clucked his tongue. "I have heard about these things. But nothing such as that was done here." His dark eyes seemed to linger on our traveling bags. "But at least you still had the land. Or did you sell it when you

left?"

"No," I said. "We did not sell our land. Our glorious state decided to confiscate it." I smiled grimly. "And how do you like the new government?"

He shrugged. "It has not disturbed me yet. All things

are the same as they were."

A stout woman, who was evidently his wife, brought the steaming platter to the table and left. My father and I sat down and began our meal. The innkeeper refilled his mug.

"Why could you not just move to another part of the country where they do not know you? What is across the border that you cannot find here?"

I looked up and glared. "Freedom."

He grinned broadly. "That is what everyone says we have here now."

When we finished eating, I rose. "And now if you will

show us to our room?"

The innkeeper nodded, "Follow me upstairs." He led us to a small room in which the only furniture was a low bedstead and a dirty, straw-filled mattress. He still seemed unduly interested in the traveling bags I put on the floor.

I smiled and tapped the pistol at my belt. "I am a very

light sleeper. Very light.'

His eyes sparkled for a moment. "Sleep well. When dawn comes, you will be alive to see it.

My father and I slept fitfully and we welcomed the sun when it finally rose. After breakfast, the innkeeper appeared in a heavy coat and we began our journey on horseback.

By the sun, I estimated that it was close to noon when the innkeeper pulled up his horse on a high clearing. "I believe we are across the border now," he said, "though boundaries are fairly loose up here." He pocketed the coin I gave him. "I suppose you will be back with an army?"

It seemed that he had read my mind. I flushed slightly.

"What makes you think that?"

His smile was wide. "That is what all the young ones say. In the 14 months since Yorktown, I have heard it a dozen times. That they will return with an army and they will hang Washington, Ben Franklin, Jefferson, Madison and all the rest. But somehow I do not believe that it will be."

My face was still warm as I slapped my horse smartly

and rode into Canada, Ω